

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Hui Ku Maoli Ola

Hawaii HTDC- MEP

Hui Ku Maoli Ola

Client Profile:

Hui Ku Maoli Ola is an organization dedicated to the perpetuation of Hawaii's natural history and culture. Started in 1999 by long-time Waimanalo friends Rick Barboza and Matt Schirman, the company was formed in an effort to protect Hawaii's diminishing natural resources and cultural practices through the creation of a native Hawaiian plant nursery. By integrating education, service, and the propagation of native Hawaiian plants, they are heightening public awareness and appreciation of this integral part of our precious island home. Hui Ku Maoli Ola employs 5 people at their facility in Waimanalo, Hawaii.

Situation:

In 1999 and 2000 the company created awareness of the importance of native Hawaiian plants to the overall ecosystem of the islands and established itself as authority in the subject. Matt and Rick increased the company's visibility via lectures, newspaper and magazine articles and television appearances. By 2002 demand for the company's plant products was outpacing its capacity. Matt and Rick knew that they needed to expand in order to capitalize on the opportunity at hand before someone else did. The company lacked a strategic plan and had not developed marketing materials or a website.

Solution:

Hui Ku Maoli Ola was able to take advantage of a matching grant from the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture administered by the Hawaii MEP (Hawaii HTDC- MEP) formerly known as Innovative Solutions and a NIST MEP network affiliate. Hawaii MEP's project manager, Bill Wiedmann, assessed the company's needs and coordinated the delivery of services designed to help the company reach a new level. Independent consultant, Moriah Lewis, worked with the company to produce a strategic business plan that matched the founders' goals and long-term objectives for the company. Clutch Design, a graphic design company, created a company logo, corporate portfolio, plant catalog and website. The results were so impressive that the plant catalogs, which were intended to be a marketing giveaway, were sold for \$10 each at the first plant show in which they were displayed. With their new marketing materials in hand, Matt and Rick approached the buyer at Wal-Mart to once again try to get their plants in the store. They had been trying for two years to sell to Wal-Mart and had filled out an application four times. This time they met the buyer, showed him their plant catalog and had product in the store one week later.

Results:

- * Produced a strategic business plan.
- * Created a new company logo, corporate portfolio, plant catalog, and website.

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- * Increased employees by 50 percent, from 5 employees to 11 employees.
- * Expanded market, with product now available in Wal-Mart and Home Depot stores in Hawaii.
- * Anticipated move to larger site.

Testimonial:

"The marketing materials communicated to our potential clients that we are a bona fide business and that they will be dealing with a professional organization. Now, landscapers call us first for their plant needs. Our business plan helps us retain our focus and keep pushing us forward."

Rick K. Barboza, Owner